FLOORS OF GAS-TAR AND GRAVEL.

We were asked a fortnight ago to state the best mode of paving with gas-tar and gravel. The following method and proportions, as used by an esteemed correspondent, have answered the purpose well. Two bushels of gravel, or broken stones, sifted through half-inch gauge; one-third of a bushel of slaked and sifted lime; one-third of a bushel of sharp sand or road-stuff; and two gallons of coal gas tar. The gravel or broken stone, and the tar, should be mixed gradually by spades, on a large mortar-board with ledges round it, till every stone is wetted, and then sift over it and well mix the lime and the sand. Then spread the concrete thus formed, three inches thick evenly over the space to be covered, which should be previously levelled. When the space is covered, or the day's work done, roll it (as soon as it will bear) with an iron roller, and sift sand and lime after the roller where tar squeezes out. It should not be used for a week at least; and the more frequently it is rolled the better it will be. Brick-rubbish, or burnt earth may be used instead of gravel. When properly executed, a floor of this description is impermeable by wet, and will resist rats and the hoofs of horses. It might be used advantageously for stables, and is inexpensive.

New Books.

The Journal of the Archæological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. No. 11. London, Longman; Oxford, Parker.

The September number of this work contains several of the papers read at the meetings of the Institute in Winchester and in York,—namely, Sir Richard Westmacott's essay on the progress of sculpture in England (of which we gave an abstract at the time*); notices of the priory of Southwick, in Southampton, by the Rev. Mr. Gunner; Towyn-y-Capel, Holyhead, by the Hon. Mr. Stanley, M.P.; and others. Mr. Way contributes a paper on ancient chess-men, as illustrative of mediæval costume; but the paper which would most immediately interest our readers is "On some arrangements for the hanging of bells in churches without towers," by Mr. Parker. This is illustrated by sixteen admirable wood engravings of bell-cots and gables, and will be found useful.

We make the following extracts from the miscellaneous intelligence.

Mural Decorations in Churches.—The frequent discoveries of mural decorations in colour, recently made even in small parish churches, on the removal of the thick coats of whitewash with which their walls for many successive years had been beautified, appear to establish the fact, that all churches, from the Norman times until the reformation, were decorated with colour in a greater or less degree, both on the plane surfaces and the mouldings. Mr. Charles Dorrien has forwarded to the committee sketches of subjects brought to light during the restoration of the church of Mid-Lavant, Sussex; these paintings, apparently of the latter part of the 15th century, are arranged in compartments, and seem to have formed a series representing the sacraments and services of the church. One of them exhibited the rite of interment; the priest, vested in an alb, touches with the processional cross the corpse wrapped in the shroud, marked upon the breast with a large cross patée. On the south wall of the nave appeared a large figure of St. George, date, about t. Hen. VII. Mr. Dorrien remarked that indications were discernible of three successive decorations; the earliest being coeval with the fabric, and consisting of designs in outline in coarse red paint. Many traces of mural paintings have been found in the churches of that part of Sussex, but mostly foliated ornaments and zig-zag patterns.

A notice and representation of similar paintings, recently uncovered on the north side of the nave in Melcombe-Horsey Church, Dorset, has been communicated by the Rev. Charles Bingham. They are in very imperfect condition, the design apparently of the earliest part of the 15th century.

Manor House, Crewkerne.—The attention of the central committee has been called, by Mr. Richard Hussey, to the existence of a good example of the domestic arrangements of the 14th century, in Somersetshire. The rectorial manor-house at Crewkerne, consists of the original buildings, apparently in the style of the reign of Edward II., with an addition in the perpendicular style. It is in a very dilapidated condition, and will, probably, be soon pulled down to make way for a modern dwelling-house. The original features are in part concealed by ivy, but some of them are perfectly visible: a window in one of the gables is of two lights, and, as is not uncommon in *domestic* buildings of that age, has a transom. There is a projection on the eastern side of the house, possibly intended as a chapel. This building appeared to be a valuable specimen of domestic architecture, during a period of which few similar works exist, and it deserves to be carefully planned and drawn. The original part seems to have been but little altered; the general composition is very picturesque, and the site, adjoining to the western side of the church-yard, was well chosen. Mr. Hussey expressed the hope that some member of the institute might be disposed to examine this fabric without delay, and preserve memorials of its character and details.

Market Place, Ashburton.—The market-place of the town of Ashburton, Devon, a curious timbered fabric of considerable antiquity, consists of an open arcade, formed with pointed arches of wood, supporting a lean-to roof, on either side, and a single upper story. Its dimensions are about 150 feet in length, by 10 or 12 feet in width, the upper part of the building being considerably less wide, on account of the pentise roof on each side. This ancient structure has fallen into decay, and, according to the report of the Rev. Arthur Hussey, it will inevitably, unless some steps be taken to prevent its removal, be demolished on the expiration of an existing lease, terminating at the death of a person above eighty years of age. He suggested that, at least, some examination of its construction should be made by a competent person, and a representation, plan, or section, preserved, as a memorial of an interesting specimen of a class of buildings of which few now remain.

* See page 377, *ante*.

Correspondence.

ANTS IN DWELLING HOUSES.

Sir,—Knowing your desire to contribute to the comfort and convenience of our dwellings, I presume to address you on a subject that somewhat differs from those generally treated of in your excellent journal. Some of the houses in Pall Mall are infested by *ants*, similar in form to those we see in the country, but much smaller and of a reddish colour; they swarm in such multitudes, as to become an intolerable nuisance, generally frequenting the warmest parts of the house, and finding their way into sugar-canisters, bread-cupboards, &c., and covering all that is succulent and edible. The unwelcome intruders do not confine themselves to inanimate substances, but introduce themselves into wearing apparel, crawling about the body, thereby producing a titillation far from agreeable.

You will greatly oblige me and other sufferers from these tormenting insects, by the insertion of this letter in your next number. Some one of your correspondents may have the charity to suggest the means of extirpation. Camphor has been tried; they evidently dislike it, for they avoid its proximity. Fumigation has been recommended, but I imagine it would be inefficacious in a large house. Beetles that abounded previously to their appearance, have nearly disappeared. I am, Sir, &c.,

W. C.

*** Cajeput oil has been found effectual for destroying the red ant in timber.

NEW TRAP FOR HOUSE DRAINS.

Sir,—My attention having been directed to a letter at p. 477 in your journal, from Mr. Lamb, respecting the improved drain-trap at p. 463, I have to state in reply thereto, that I cannot acknowledge having formed the trap in question from any description of his, for the following reasons:—first, because I have built and recommended others to build, for several years past, traps of the same form in brick-work; and secondly, because I have never seen the description alluded to, signed Z. Z.

A hint for the formation of this trap was given by me in The Builder some time last year.—I am, Sir, &c. John Phillips.

London, Oct. 13th, 1846.

Miscellanea.

Haarlem Lake to be Drained in Thirteen Months.—The *Leeghwater* engine, made by the Cornish manufacturers, Messrs. Harvey, of Hayle, and Fox, of Perran, from the design by Messrs. Gibbs and Dean, of Westminster, the engineers to the Haarlemmeer Commissioners, has given so much satisfaction since its erection last year, that two other engines, equalled in dimensions by none in the world besides the gigantic *Leeghwater—par excellence* "the drier up of water"—are in course of formation by the same parties. These are not so immense in power and dimensions as the first, which discharges nearly 1,000,000 tons of water in the twenty-four hours, from eleven pumps, 63 inches in diameter. But though only provided with eight pumps each, the diameter is greater, namely, 73 inches; and when all three are at work they will discharge 2,800,000 tons of water every twenty-four hours; or, since the lake covers an area of seventy square miles, and is estimated to contain 1,000,000,000 tons of water, the whole quantity will be discharged in about thirteen months! The expenditure of fuel by the Leeghwater is found in practice to be extremely small, being reduced to 2¼ pounds per net horse-power per hour, instead of the usual average of fifteen pounds, and even twenty to twenty-five pounds. The cost of engines, fuel, buildings, and workmen will be 140,000*l.*, while, as shewn by the *Mining Journal*, the cost by the old system of engines would have exceeded 240,000*l.*, and the work have taken four years to complete.

Artists' Studies in British Museum.—The *Westminster Review* says, when inquiring into the efficiency of certain commissions—"we would not lose this opportunity of drawing the attention of the Commissioners of the Fine Arts to the new regulations at the British Museum, by which artists are now forbidden to copy in chalk or colours effects of light and shade, for the study of which in the works of Rembrandt, &c., they were formerly in the habit of resorting to the print room. Whether this prohibition arises out of economy on the part of the trustees in not providing a sufficient number of superintendents to prevent the works being damaged, or from somebody's friend being put into office who may care nothing for the progress of art, but much about saving himself the trouble, the fact that such a prohibition exists says but little for high patronage, or for the public spirit of the guardians of a national institution.

Purification of Gas.—Mr. Johnston's patent for the absorption of the ammoniacal, hydro-sulphuric, and hydro-cyanic vapours, by means of sulphate of iron, in the dry way, or with barely sufficient moisture for the water of crystallization necessary in the interchange and formation of the salts, has been tried at the Horseferry-road station of the Chartered Gas Company. Besides the purification, and the saving of 30 per cent. of lime (at the greater, though redeemed expense, of sulphate of iron, we presume), by this new mode of treatment, other alleged advantages, consequent on its adoption, are the reduction of the gross pressure of the liquid mode by 40 to 50 per cent., and the equivalent diminution of the consequent loss; besides the acquisition of the valuable products.

Oak.—The largest piece of oak timber ever seen in Brecon passed through the town to the canal on Monday last. It was cut in the woods of the late W. Vaughan, Esq., of Penymaes, and contained 230 feet of timber; two carriages broke under its weight, and it was at length conveyed on rollers over the pitching of the streets, by the united efforts of sixteen horses and a number of men.—*Silurian.*

The *Journal du Havre* states that, on the night of Monday last, the greatest part of the wall of the quay of the new dock at Honfleur, which has not yet been opened, was forced down by the water getting in between the wall and the earth.

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